St. Vincent's Bulletin

The Order of St. Vincent for Acolytes

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Affiliated with the Scottish Guild of Servers and
The British Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary

HEADQUARTERS — WASHINGTON, D. C.

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ADVENT

Saint Andrew's Day is November 30th. The First Sunday in Advent is always the Sunday nearest Saint Andrew's Day. This year November 29th. The Church Year, which begins at Advent, has many vigils or eves, or days and over-night preparation services for certain feasts. Some of the greater festivals have longer preparatory periods. Advent, with four Sundays, is the preparation for Nativity-tide, Christmas Day being the major feast. The color of all vigils and longer preparatory seasons is purple. Purple immediately reminds the eye of special work, and in the religious life, that of penitence or repentance which is a virtue urging us to hate our sins because of the goodness of God, and to work for the best spiritual preparation for the reception of God's grace. Advent means an arrival. Therefore, suggesting a coming. Advent then tells us of three comings; Our Lord at Christmas, God becoming Man, which we call the Incarnation; Our Lord coming in the Blessed Sacrament of Holy Communion, born in our hearts; Our Lord coming through the ages in various ways, and at the end of the world, as judge. No longer is it a penitential period of fasting and abstinence, but the color of purple reminds us that there is work to be done. When purple is the color the Te Deum and Gloria in Excelsis (in our Western Church uses) are always omitted.

Advent is a new beginning. Begin to examine your Rule of Life. If you do not own a Bible (and one with the Apocrypha) or a Book of Common Prayer invest in either. Study the Prayer Book from Page 1 to Lv. Live the Church Year. Read the Bible every day. Select a scheme of Lessons. Make yourself work all of Advent, then, continue the work all of the year. Especially, read and study pages L and Li. Doing this, good results will follow. You will build up a Christmas self-denial offering. You won't mix Advent up with Christmastide. You will be prepared to enjoy Christmastide, and the feast of Santa Claus will take a very secondary place. You will have the real thing.

Acolytes and servers in many places will assist in polishing ornaments, and bringing in greens to adorn the Church. Working in and around the Church requires discipline. No irreverence, because a server is always reverent, and therefore, no loud talking.

The Advent preparation for Holy Communion at Christmas is the important object. Every member of the Order has promised to receive Holy Communion, where possible, at that time,

QUESTIONS RECEIVED

We received several, with the request that they be answered in the next Bulletin. Some will be, here, others will follow in relation to the Church Year later.

1. How should the Ember Days be kept? Make certain you read about them on page Li of the Book of Common Prayer and know when they occur. Trace every reference to them in the Prayer Book. The proper lessons, the proper prayers, and The Litany on page 560. They are days of fasting and abstinence, meaning no meat, and extraordinary self discipline. The Prayer Book provides a Proper which means there should be a celebration of the Eucharist when it is possible to attend. If that is not possible, then a Spiritual Communion, and if you have the proper devotional manual that will contain such an office. With all this assistance and direction use it, and keep the days full of recollection and intention for the ministry those preparing for it, those to be ordained, and as you can extend your intercessions to cover the three days with every phase of the subject you can recall. Especially, make an

extraordinary effort to go into the Church, or some open Church in harmony with your training, and pray. Make an offering from your self-denials for the seminaries, or send it to the Order to assist one of its members attending college or seminary in preparation for the ministry. That is a big order, but is its objective worth less? What would happen if Ember Days were kept generally in that fashion?

2. Give directions for singing the Litany in procession. They are given in our Tract 4 Processions—4 cents. Send for a copy. Further, the Priest, alone, may say the Litany in procession. So if he has two or more servers the procession would be marked by greater dignity. There seems to be some question about the start of the procession. Examine the Litany. It begins with the triple invocation. Generally, but not in all places, the Priest and servers kneel for that invocation. It isn't done in some places because the habit hasn't been given the proper attention. At that time the Priest, if the officiant, is not especially doing a priestly act, and, therefore, he kneels with the servers. Probably that was in the mind of the questioner, because it is more and more coming up.

3. Write something about the use of the Creche as a shrine of the Nativity.

In Advent to Lent—Liturgical Notes—2 cents per copy, there are some notes on setting up the framework of the Creche on December 8th, and its completion by The Nativity. That is an old English habit which has almost died out, and is done in the United States in only a few places. If we are not careful the Roman liturgical movement will steal it from us and capitalize it. There is a hand book in connection with this printed in England, but it needs revision, and one or a group expert in such matters could provide the American Church with such a guide, and include all you would like to know about making the Creche a practical support of the Incarnation from December 8th to the Octave of the Epiphany.

The great weakness of Creche displays lay in their objectivity. They are nice to look at, even to visit, but subjectively lacking as not being prayed at . . . One other lack is the absence of devotional helps at the Creche to guide pilgrims while there. There are plenty such printed for the Anglican Church, and books of meditations, but they are not being placed by the Creche where they may be used. Our people may go here and there, boldly, but they feel inferior if they go to the Creche. What they should do is go, kneel, adore, and break the inhibition, and find faith.

Of course, the clergy and servers usually have a distinctive part in the first visit to and blessing of the Creche. They also, frequently during Nativitytide make other visits. The Creche becomes a Station during the season.

4. The Epiphany season. How is it to be kept? I have heard the Wise Men should not be placed in the Creche before Epiphany when they should be carried there in a dignified procession. Is that true? Yes it is . . . but . . . this is America, and we know well that the Feast of Santa Claus begins and ends on Christmas Day. Everything about the Creche must be done at one time, in a hurry, and that is the end! If you will defy the mores, and brave smaller congregations, and really keep Nativitytide, you will make the Epiphany a real little Christmas. Again, the lack of devotional aids to bring this all about is largely responsible for the compact Creche with the Wise Men on Christmas Day. The Epiphany Season itself, is really to emphasize the vocation of our Lord beginning with His Baptism. Anciently, the Epiphany, rather than the Nativity was the greater festival. The emphasis on the Nativity has brought about the combination the visit of both the Shepherds and the Wisemen, and there is reasonable doubt if in our time they can be separated. However, we can rediscover the Epiphany, as we are many other priceless treasures our Church possesses.

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL reminds you that the Order of Saint Vincent for Acolytes will complete 39 years on January 22nd, 1954, it being St. Vincent's Day. Founded in 1915, nearly 11 years after the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, without a dissenting voice, nulified the infamous Canon on Ceremonies and Practices in the Book of Common Prayer. You younger men and boys know nothing about that or what it meant. If you study the recommendations of the Church Liturgical Commission you will better understand what is meant by, "we have gone a long way in liturgical development since 1904." Four of the ten clergy and laity under the inspiration of the late Robert T. Walker, an architect, server in the Advent Parish, Boston, are still alive to recall the founding of the Order. At that time, there were probably 300 servers, in about 100 parishes, within the American Church. Mostly men and young men. We, and the parishes, were known as "rebels". Today we have thousands of servers who are taken for granted. This is a continuous subject for thanksgiving in our prayers.

The founders resolved to keep the objects and rules as simple as possible. They are the same today as then. They

can be accommodated to and supplemented in every parish. We were divided on one matter. Shall it be the Order or the Guild? The majority decided that it shall be the Order so that it would stimulate lay vocation, even as the religious orders of monks provide a different vocation. Growth and experience would produce changes. We have seen other groups of servers rise and vanish. The Order continues. We sought no official recognition by the Church. We preferred to remain unofficial. We have. Our daily correspondence, and the multitudious consultations including the sale of our printings, point to the fact that we have been a most forceful element in the marvellous liturgical movement.

THE PRESENT MANUAL CONTINUES TO BE THE BASIS OF AFFILIATION

However, we have arrived at the point where we must face the youth situation, and create a GUILD as a preparatory training centre for the ORDER. Youth is being confirmed at eight to ten years of age, and applying for admission into the Order. We have been affiliating thousands of boys who serve one to three years only to learn they have been dropped. We have been recommending A SERVER'S MANUAL, prepared by the Diocese of Massachusetts, not only for temporary guidance in forming Guilds, but also for reactions in making up our own Manual for the Guild. We have been disappointed by the lack of suggestions. Time is short. Send fifteen cents in stamps to the Department of Social Service, One Joy Street, Boston 8, Mass., for a copy of a A SERVER'S MANUAL.

It has helped development of parochial guilds, but the clergy want affiliation with the Order, because we leap over the parochial walls and join hands with the servers of the entire Anglican Communion.

Our supply of THE MANUAL is exhausted, and we do not choose to reprint it at great expense until we make our final decisions regarding the Order and the Guild sometime early in 1954. There are sufficient printings giving the Objects-Rules, Prayers, and the Admission Office and The Office to tide over all affiliants until the new Manual appears.

AN ACOLYTE'S BOOK

A Priest Associate has compiled one. It contains exactly what a Priest wishes to put into the hands of a Warden or a lay trainer of servers and acolytes. It is being carefully reviewed by the lay members of the Council, and that is taking considerable time. We hope that we can arrange to print and distribute it within the next few months, or at least let it be known that it is to be had.

In making changes we must be governed by our primary rule to make both the Order and the Guild an overall fellowship. We cannot, as we have consistently refused, include any rules regarding obligatory confession or group liturgical developments which may otherwise be emphasized in parishes.

Until the Guild details are worked out, we continue to recommend that the two and a half inch walnut cross on a black cord, be purchased from Church book stores, and generally used, unless the local Priest decides otherwise.

We receive various kinds of correspondence. Clergy write telling us why the Chapters are being declared dormant. The chief reasons, the lack of sincerity on the part of affiliated members and trainees; the failure to keep appointments; failing to keep the minimum monthly Communion rule; and frequently, failure to attend worship faithfully.

On the other hand, we have, without wicked intention, been notified that THE OFFICE is rarely said; that the most is not made of it.

It is increasingly difficult to allure the membership and trainees to meetings. Very difficult to carry on a progressive liturgical programe of instruction. As some laymen have written, the solution may lie in at least one monthly meeting with THE OFFICE and very definite instructions at that time.

Again, the SILVER MEDAL AWARD is a terrific problem. More and more we note those being awarded are NOT being reported on the annual reports. We may consider something different. A proposal will be made to the Council at the next annual meeting that we give a TEN YEAR SILVER PLATED MEDAL, and reserve the solid silver medal for twenty or more years.

TOO MUCH SLACK
TIGHTEN THE CORDS

WITHOUT AIDS. Learn your work. Bending to pick up guides when facing the Altar is not dignified. Hands should be free for action, and folded before the breast.

HANDS TOGETHER. Practice it. When not in use, generally, held together before the breast, especially when moving from one position to another.

HURT FEELINGS. The result of being rebuked for failing to keep the minimum rules of worship attendance and Communions. The OSV Medal is conferred and worn as a reminder of faithfulness, dependancy and honor.

SUPPORT CHRIST'S CHURCH. Spontaneously. Make a pledge. Faithfully use the envelopes. Value your stewardship. Pay your own dues to the Order.

GOOD ACTING

Serving is not theatrical, but it has relationship with good acting. Mr. Fitzroy Davis, dramatic critic writes: "the basic requirements of good acting are concentration, relaxation, and authority. It does not matter how many times you go over a scene, if you live it through, live it intensely. If you try hard, and still not confident about it, that may be you are trying too hard. There is a difficult balance between tension and relaxation everyone has to find in acting. To act you need a good heart, and three I's, imagination, individuality and industry."

NEW BOOKS WITH LITURGICAL INTEREST. Other Recommendations

PRAYER BOOK STUDIES. Vol. IV. THE EUCHARISTIC LITURGY. 343 pages. $1.50 per copy from the Church Hymnal Corporation, 20 Exchange Place, New York 5, N. Y. Every layman should be interested in Prayer Book Revision. This is really a must book of liturgical information. Other books, No. 1—Baptism and Confirmation. No. 2—The Liturgical Lectionary. No. 5—The Litany.

SERVING AT THE ALTAR. Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York, N. Y. A 41 page manual for servers in that parish. A very limited supply. Information from Mr. Edward Garlick, 422 West 115th St., New York 25, N. Y.

THIS OUR SACRIFICE—by Horsfield and Riley. $1.75. Forty-seven pictures of the Priest and Server at the Eucharist. Explanation of the action.

THE RITUAL REASON WHY—Walker. Questions and answers on all services, ceremonies, ornaments, and Church Year now selling at $1.35.

RITUAL NOTES—Cairncross. A guide to rites generally, but especially the more solemn, according to the Western Use now selling at $5.00.

WHY I AM NOT A ROMAN CATHOLIC—Ross. $2.25. The latest and best book on that subject.

THE HOLY MASS IN ACTION. From Belgium. A card board set up with four cards showing the Altar, Priest in 17 positions; the Server in 11 positions; all liturgical objects. Card board cut-outs with slots to move pieces into position. $5.00 per set from Mr. Joseph Weska, 220 Ardmore Avenue, Upper Darby, Pa.

THE SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION. For the congregation with Merbecke music. Four pages seven by eight inches illustrated with Priest and Servers in eleven positions. Five cents per copy. Rev. J. B. Clark, Box 432, Lewisburg, Penna. Prefers orders in larger lots. Fr. Clark sells other illustrated folders.

THE M.P. LENDING LIBARY, Convent of the Holy Nativity, 101 E. Division Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Write the Sisters for the book you wish to borrow or for assistance locating a book. You pay the mail. From the Library you may borrow THE HISTORY OF ACOLYTES AND SERVERS by W. S. Williams. 66 pages packed with unusual information about the servers and their ornaments through the centuries. The Morehouse-Gorham Co. plans to import copies for sale if they may be had.

FAITH AND UNITY is a quarterly magazine summarizing all current Unity movements. Four shillings a year or $1.00, through the American Church Union, 347 Madison Avenue, N. Y. 17, N. Y.

THE PEOPLE'S MISSAL. The only manual in the American Church for the laity containing the Proper for all Sundays and Holy Days. $6.00 The Frank Gavin Liturgical Foundation, Mount Sinai, L. I., N. Y.

THE SERVER. The quarterly magazine of the English Guild of the Servants of the Sanctuary. Packed with general instruction. Three Shillings. About 75 cents per year. W. Hare, 27 Elthorne Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex, England. Send International money order.

THE ORDO KALENDAR FOR 1954. Fr. Ruth the Editor. Showing in colors all the days of the Church Year and the order for the day. 50 cents per copy. If ordered in quantities much less. Some Chapters sell them to earn money. The Ashby Company, Erie, Penna. You may have contact with a Church Book Store. If not, order from the Morehouse-Gorham Company, 14 E. 41st Street, New York 17, N. Y., or 29 E. Madison Street, Room 1814, Chicago 2, Ill., or 261 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco 2, Calif.

We highly recommend THE HOLY CROSS MAGAZINE, West Park, N. Y. $3.00 per year. One of our outstanding devotional magazines which comments on general theological subjects, and carries a monthly Ordo of Worship and Intercession in each issue.

Write to the OSV office in Washington, D. C. for our own list of publications. Also to the Secretary of Publications, 980 Memorial Drive, Cambridge 38, Mass., for Creche devotional helps. Ask for their folder of printings.